

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GABORO 00896 01 OF 02 011321Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 HA-05 /078 W
-----076437 011438Z /42

O 311515Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1908
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 0896

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV SHUM RH BC SF UK
SUBJECT: DEATH OF FOREIGNERS WHILE IN DETENTION

REF: GABORONE 890

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT
CONCERNING DEATH OF THREE FOREIGNERS WHILE UNDER DETENTION
BY THE BDF.

QUOTE THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT ON TUESDAY
28TH MARCH A BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE PATROL WENT TO A GAME
FARM IN THE NORTHERN TULI BLOCK TO INVESTIGATE REPORTS THAT
RHODESIAN SOLDIERS HAD BEEN FERRIED ACROSS THE SHASHE RIVER
TO BOTSWANA DURING THE EASTER WEEKEND BY SOME RESIDENTS
OF THE AREA. THESE REPORTS WERE CONFIRMED BY SOME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GABORO 00896 01 OF 02 011321Z

EMPLOYEES AT THE FAR AND THE BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE
CONTINGENT DECIDED TO DETAIN TWO PERSONS FOR QUESTION-
ING. THE PERSONS DETAINED WERE MICHAEL ARDEN WHO WAS
EMPLOYED AS A MANAGER OF A FARM IN THE AREA AND
NICHOLAS LOVE, A YOUNG BRITISH TOURIST. THEY WERE
TAKEN TO BOBONONG WHERE THEY DETAINED IN THE POLICE
CELLS FOR THE NIGHT.

ON WEDNESDAY MORNING THE BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE PATROL TOOK THE DETAINEES BACK TO THE FARM AS THEY WANTED TO FIND THE MANAGER OF GILFILLAN GAME FARMS, WILLIAM DE BEER. THEY WENT IN SEARCH OF HIM AND FOUND HIM TRAVELLING TOWARDS PONTS DRIFT. THEY INFORMED HIM THAT HE WAS BEING DETAINED AND TAKEN TO SELEBI-PHIKWE FOR QUESTIONING. HE SAID THAT HE WANTED TO CONTACT THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE BEFORE PROCEEDING BUT PERMISSION WAS REFUSED.

THE THREE DETAINEES WHO WERE ALL WEARING MILITARY TYPE CLOTHES WERE PLACED IN THE BACK OF AN OPEN LANDROVER UNDER THE GUARD OF TWO ARMED SOLDIERS. THEY WERE WARNED THAT THEY WOULD BE SHOT IF THEY ATTEMPTED TO ESCAPE. THE PARTY PROCEEDED TOWARDS THEIR TEMPORARY BASE CAMP NEAR THE TULI CIRCLE WHICH IS THE BOTSWANA/RHODESIA BORDER. AS THE VEHICLE SLOWED DOWN AT THE APPROACH TO THE CAMP, THE THREE DETAINEES ATTACKED THEIR GUARDS. ONE OF THEM MANAGED TO TAKE A RIFLE FROM A GUARD. THEY JUMPED OFF THE VEHICLE AND TWO OF THEM STARTED RUNNING AWAY. THE THIRD DETAINEE POINTED THE RIFLE AT THE BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE MEN AND IT APPEARED THAT HE INTENDED TO FIRE SO THE PATROL COMMANDER ORDERED HIS MEN TO TO FIRE. THE THREE DETAINEES WERE KILLED ON THE SPOT.

A POSTMORTEM IS BEING CONDUCTED TODAY AND AN INQUEST WILL BE HELD LATER.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GABORO 00896 01 OF 02 011321Z

A SEARCH OF THE PROPERTY OF THE DECEASED PERSONS HAS REVEALED THAT ONE OF THEM WAS IN POSSESSION OF AN UNLICENSED RIFLE AND AUTOMATIC PISTOL AND 7.62 CALIBRE AMMUNITION MADE FOR AUTOMATIC RIFLES. MANY ARTICLES OF MILITARY CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT INCLUDING BINOCULARS WERE ALSO FOUND. THE DIARY KEPT BY ONE OF THEM CONTAINS REPORTS OF SURVEILLANCE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY HIM IN JOHANNESBURG DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1977 ON BEHALF OF A POLITICAL SECURITY AGENCY. ANOTHER DIARY CONTAINS DETAILS OF THE EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES, RADIO AND RADIO CALL-SIGNS USED BY A BOTSWANA DEFENSE FORCE LANCE CORPORAL WHO CALLED AT THE FAR EARLIER IN THE MONTH. UNQUOTE END UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GABORO 00896 02 OF 02 011423Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 HA-05 /078 W
-----077024 011438Z /42

O 311515Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1909
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 0896

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL IN AN UNUSUAL INITIATIVE, SECRETARY TO CABINET STEENKAMP TELEPHONED DCM MORNING MARCH 31 TO INQUIRE WHETHER GOB'S STATEMENT ON INCIDENT HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND TO PASS ON A FEW DETAILS WHICH DID NOT APPEAR IN THE PRESS RELEASE. ACCORDING TO STEENKAMP, GOB PLANE SENT TO AREA MARCH 30 RETURNED CARRYING LOAD OF "EVIDENCE", INCLUDING UNIFORMS AND OTHER MILITARY ITEMS, WHICH SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS THAT DEAD MEN WERE ENGAGED IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES. STEENKAMP SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVES THAT THE TWO SOUTH AFRICANS WERE ENGAGED IN ESPIONAGE WHILE THE UK CITIZEN (WHO WAS 19 YEARS OLD) MAY HAVE BEEN AN "INNOCENT VICTIM" OF THE INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO STEENKAMP, BDF THOUGHT NICHOLAS LOVE WAS SOUTH AFRICAN AND WAS NOT AWARE OF HIS UK NATIONALITY UNTIL AFTER HE WAS DEAD.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GABORO 00896 02 OF 02 011423Z

3. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER TURNER, WHOSE MISSION IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN HANDLING CONSULAR PROBLEMS SURROUNDING DEATH OF UK CITIZEN, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT NOTIFICATION OF NICHOLAS LOVE'S DETENTION AND DEATH WAS NOT RECEIVED UNTIL MARCH 30. THEREFORE, OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION WAS RECEIVED UNTIL 48 HOURS AFTER LOVE'S DETENTION AND 24 HOURS AFTER HIS DEATH.

4. COMMENT: THE AREA WHERE THE BORDERS OF BOTSWANA, SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA MEET HAS BEEN VERY TENSE IN RECENT MONTHS. RACIAL TENSIONS SOMETIMES RUN HIGH IN THE AREA WHERE MANY OF THE FARMS ARE STILL OWNED BY SOUTH AFRICANS WHO ORIGINALLY SETTLED IN THE TULI BLOCK BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE, THESE SOUTH AFRICAN FARMERS RE-REQUESTED THAT THE TULI BLOCK AREA BE ABSORBED INTO SOUTH AFRICA, AND CROSS BORDER TIES STILL RUN DEEP IN THE AREA. THE THREE CORNERS AREA WAS ALSO SCENE OF A RECENT INCURSION BY SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN WHICH A MOTSWANA WOMAN WAS RAPED. THESE HISTORICAL TENSIONS AND THE RECENT AMBUSH OF BDF PATROL BY RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES AT KAZANGULA (SOME 500 KILOMETERS AWAY) MAY IN SOME MEASURE ACCOUNT FOR TRIGGER HAPPY BDF BEHAVIOR IN THIS INCIDENT.

5. EVEN IF STATEMENTS OF FACT IN GOB'S RELEASE ARE TRUE, THE EXPLANATION APPEARS TO POSE AS MANY QUESTIONS AS IT ANSWERS. AMONG MORE OBVIOUS ARE:
A) IF DETAINEES WERE SUSPECTED OF ESPIONAGE, WHY WAS THEIR INTERROGATION SO HAPHAZARD AS TO LEAVE THEIR CITIZENSHIP IN DOUBT?
B) WOULD PRESUMABLY SOPHISTICATED SOUTH AFRICAN OR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GABORO 00896 02 OF 02 011423Z

RHODESIAN AGENTS WEAR "MILITARY TYPE CLOTHES" AND ACCUMULATE EQUIPMENT AND DIARIES THAT WOULD REVEAL THEIR ACTIVITIES?
C) WHY DID GOB DELAY PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE INCIDENT FOR 24 HOURS AND ISSUE STATEMENT ONLY AFTER SABC HAD MADE THE INCIDENT PUBLIC?
D) MOST IMPORTANT, WHY WERE THE TWO FLEEING AND UNARMED DETAINEES SHOT AFTER THE ONE ARMED ESCAPEE HAD BEEN KILLED?

6. WE BELIEVE THAT EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED PUBLIC STATEMENT AND STEENKAMP'S UNUSUAL APPROACH TO DCM INDICATE GOB EMBARRASSMENT OVER THIS INCIDENT AND CONCERN FOR ITS IMPACT ON BOTSWANA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. PENDING RESULTS OF AUTOPSY AND INQUEST WHICH MAY HELP ESTABLISH MORE COMPLETE EVIDENCE, GOB WILL CERTAINLY BE ACCUSED OF SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION INVOLVING DEATH OF PRISONERS WHILE IN DETENTION. THIS ALLEGATION CANNOT BE REFUTED ON BASIS OF EXISTING EVIDENCE WHICH, AT A MINIMUM, APPEARS TO ESTABLISH THAT TWO UNARMED AND FLEEING MEN WERE NEEDLESSLY SHOT.

7. HOWEVER, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RECOGNIZE THAT THIS TRAGIC INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN A REMOTE AREA FAR FROM THE CAPITAL AND AFTER SERIOUS PROVOCATION ALLEGEDLY INVOLVING AN ARMED ESCAPE ATTEMPT. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT GOB WOULD CONDONE AS A MATTER OF POLICY THE DEATH OF SUSPECTS WHILE IN DETENTION BY BOTSWANA POLICE OR MILITARY AUTHORITIES. THE DEATH OF THESE DETAINEES IS A MEASURE OF THE INCREASING TENSION UNDER WHICH ALL BATSWANA LIVE AND AN INDICATION OF THE DIFFICULTIES FACING GOB IN ITS EFFORTS TO PRESERVE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW IN BOTSWANA.
NORLAND

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, HUMAN RIGHTS, DEATHS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GABORO00896
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780142-0305
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978035/aaaaadjk.tel
Line Count: 235
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 555ff2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GABORONE 890
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3275228
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEATH OF FOREIGNERS WHILE IN DETENTION
TAGS: PDEV, SHUM, RH, BC, SF, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/555ff2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014